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Verhoeven's Living Negritos and the Story of Zakharias Ze

A Prehistory of Homo floresiensis

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Abstract

A Catholic priest and amateur palaeontologist, Father Theodor Verhoeven (SVD) is best known for his discovery of sites on Flores Island (Indonesia) that yielded fossilized remains of Middle Pleistocene stegodons and lithic materials suggesting early occupation by pre-*sapiens* hominins. Eventually, these finds influenced investigations that resulted in the discovery of *Homo floresiensis* in Liang Bua cave. Verhoeven's earliest fieldwork, however, concerned other Florenese caves, where he found Late Holocene remains of small-bodied *Homo sapiens* which he identified as 'negritos' or 'proto-negritos.' In this article, I present new evidence revealing that Verhoeven believed negritos survived on Flores as discrete populations during his own time and, moreover, that one such negrito was a fellow Catholic priest. Though Verhoeven died 13 years before the discovery of *floresiensis*, his views on both prehistoric and living 'negritos' suggest that he would likely—though ultimately incorrectly—have interpreted both as descendants of *floresiensis* and earlier hominin contemporaries of Middle Pleistocene stegodons. The significance of Verhoeven's palaeoanthropological and archaeological discoveries for subsequent, professional research illustrates one of the most remarkable collaborations between academics and amateurs in the history of anthropology.

Keywords

negritos – *Homo floresiensis* – missionary-anthropologists and -archaeologists – Flores Island (Indonesia)

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To the memory of Clark Cunningham (1934–2020), for whose generous assistance over the years, in various professional matters, I remain grateful

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The most important development in palaeoanthropology over the last two decades has been the discovery of small-bodied, non-*sapiens* hominins[1] surviving to Late Pleistocene times in Southeast and East Asia. The first of these was *Homo floresiensis*, found on the eastern Indonesian island of Flores in August 2003 and announced to the world in October 2004. Although the initial controversy over the interpretation of the fossils has waned, the tiny size and physically archaic features of the species, combined with geologically recent dates (initially as late as 12 thousand years ago, now revised to 50–60 thousand years ago), have challenged existing views of the course of hominin evolution and still leave many questions unanswered. Yet less well known is the curious history of palaeoanthropological investigation on the remote Indonesian island that led to the discovery, and especially the seminal role played by Theodor Verhoeven (1907–1990), a Dutch Catholic missionary and member of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) who, as an amateur palaeontologist and archaeologist, conducted research on Flores and other Indonesian islands for three decades, between 1950 and 1980.

Besides the continuities Verhoeven's early efforts imply, there are intriguing parallels between, on the one hand, the discovery team's interpretation of *floresiensis* as the descendant of a far older population of hominins associated with Middle Pleistocene stegodons and, on the other, Verhoeven's understanding of human remains, later dated to the Late Holocene, that he excavated in the 1950s. Both interpretations involved linking the respective finds with pre-*sapiens* hominins, more specifically *Homo erectus* or another, smaller-bodied hominin contemporary with *erectus*. Yet an equally noteworthy feature of Verhoeven's interpretation concerns his deployment of the concept of 'negrito'. Referring to the dark-skinned pygmoid peoples of Southeast Asia and the

1 'Hominins' are primates belonging to the genera *Homo*, *Australopithecus*, *Paranthropus*, and *Ardipithecus*. In this article 'hominin' concerns only hominins now assigned to the genus *Homo*.

Andaman Islands, 'negrito' is a category anthropologists have employed for well over a century, but which continues to inspire anthropological debate (see Endicott 2013). More specifically, Verhoeven connected what he claimed were 'groups' of 'negritos' surviving on Flores in his own day with '*Pithecanthropus*' (now *Homo erectus*) or another pre-*sapiens* hominin. By contrast, most modern palaeoanthropologists consider *floresiensis* (discovered over a decade after Verhoeven's death) to be extinct and to have left no descendants on the island. This component of the missionary-palaeoanthropologist's views on Flores's prehistory and the present phenotypical variation on the island is revealed here for the first time.

1 Verhoeven's Research Career

Educated as a classicist, Verhoeven had no training in archaeology or palaeontology, and during his postings to Catholic seminaries on Flores he was engaged primarily as a teacher of classical languages (Knepper 2019). Nevertheless, Verhoeven soon became known in palaeontological circles for his 1957 discovery of stegodon remains at sites in central Flores's So'a Basin. The discovery came after Verhoeven inspected surface finds collected in the previous year by the raja of the Nage region, Joseph Juwa Dobe Ngole (Verhoeven 1958c). Prior to this it was generally thought that large mammals such as stegodons had never moved east of Wallace's Line, the zoogeographical boundary separating western from eastern Indonesia. Verhoeven was not the first to prove this idea wrong; previously Van Heekeren (1949) had announced the discovery on Sulawesi, the large island to the north of Flores, of another kind of prehistoric elephant, *Archidiskodon celebensis*. Yet Verhoeven's discovery of numerous stegodon fossils on Flores remains important, not least because at one site he also found lithic materials that he interpreted, rather boldly but ultimately correctly, as artefacts contemporaneous with the stegodons (Verhoeven 1958c).

Prior to these discoveries, however, Verhoeven had conducted excavations in numerous caves and rock-shelters, in several of which he had encountered human remains. Among these was Liang Bua (Bua Cave) in western Flores, the 2003 discovery site of *Homo floresiensis*. Yet the hominin find for which Verhoeven remains best known was made in 1954, in Liang Toge (Toge Cave) in west-central Flores, near the north-western edge of the So'a Basin. There, Verhoeven found the skeleton of an adult of about 30 years, whose stature he estimated as 1.46 metres. Because of features of the cranium, teeth, and pelvis as well as its small size, Verhoeven described the remains as belonging to a 'negrito'. Following the advice of the Dutch palaeoanthropologist J. Huizinga,

who pointed out the skeleton's apparently early date, Verhoeven further identified it more specifically as a 'proto-negrito'. In his main article on the find (1958a), Verhoeven does not specify the sex, but in another article in the same volume (1958b) he refers to the individual as a 'man'.

Subsequently, Jacob (1967) reinterpreted the Toge Cave skeleton and concluded it was female. For this reason, and because the individual appears to have been taller than Verhoeven estimated—148.4 centimetres according to Jacob and 149.6 according to Van der Plas (2007)—later authors have questioned whether and in what sense the skeleton can be called a 'negrito', even though Jacob describes it as 'pygmoid'. For the present purpose, though, the main point is that Verhoeven did not change his views on the skeleton. As shown by new evidence that I review below, he continued to link the Toge Cave 'negrito', on the one hand, with groups of negritos that he claimed were still to be found on Flores in the twentieth century and, on the other, with far earlier Pleistocene hominins.

Nowhere in his 1958 articles does Verhoeven mention a date for the Toge skeleton. However, radiocarbon dating ordered by Huizinga in 1964 yielded a conventional age of 3,550±525 before present (Jacob 1967). When Verhoeven heard of this result is unclear, but he suggested in a later article (Verhoeven 1968) that the date given may be too recent, owing to contamination from human hands or the materials in which the bones had been wrapped. Along the same lines, an earlier note (*Steyler Missions-Chronik* 1959) announcing the results of Verhoeven's recent researches, and published in the annual SVD yearbook, had mentioned an age for the Toge remains of 30,000 years. Then, in 1962, similar dates of 30 to 40 thousand years ago (hereafter 'kya') appeared in another anonymous article on Verhoeven's discovery, included in the October issue of the magazine *Science Digest* (Knepper 2019:185–6). No source is given in either publication, yet it is difficult to see how these far older dates could have come from anyone other than Verhoeven himself.[2] This evidence is important, for it strongly suggests that Verhoeven believed his 'proto-negrito' had lived long before the end of the Pleistocene and, as we will later see, that the individual had some affinity with pre-*sapiens* stegodon hunters.

2 Personal communication with G. Knepper, 31-3-2021.

2 Negritos in Anthropology

From the discipline's earliest days, anthropologists have employed 'negrito', a Spanish term meaning 'little black person', for a phenotype encountered mainly in Southeast Asia whose chief characteristics comprise a short stature (around 1.5 metres for adult males), a dark complexion, and tight curly or frizzy hair. As the Spanish origin of the name should suggest, Europeans first used 'negrito' in reference to food-collecting pygmoid peoples living in the Philippines. Conceiving such people as an instance of a larger category of Asian pygmies, anthropologists later extended the term to encompass physically and culturally similar populations in the Malay Peninsula (western Malaysia and southern Thailand) and the Andaman Islands.

As hunter-gatherers and traders in forest products, the Philippine and Malaysian negritos live mostly in mountain forests, some distance from the taller, lighter-skinned and culturally distinct cultivators that reside closer to the coast. (In contrast, the Andaman negritos were the sole occupants of their islands before the arrival of Indians and the British in the nineteenth century.) Distinct and territorially separate populations of negritos have never been found in Indonesia, not even on the large islands of Borneo, Sumatra, or Sulawesi (Bulbeck 2013), where, according to interpretations of the negrito phenotype as an adaptation to tropical forest environments, they might be expected to occur. Nor have anthropologists ever identified distinct populations of negritos on Flores.

Despite phenotypical resemblances and evidently some genetic affinity as well (Chaubey and Endicott 2013), Malaysian and Philippine negritos often reveal closer genetic ties with neighbouring groups of non-negritos (Bulbeck 2013), and, as this might suggest, phenotypical similarities, including short stature, could have arisen independently. In other words, physical similarities may be the product of convergence, through adaptation to life in similar natural (tropical forest) and socio-economic environments, either through genetic selection or developmental plasticity (Bulbeck 2013). This would not be entirely surprising. While remaining territorially separate and culturally distinct from neighbouring populations, negritos have for a long time regularly engaged in economic exchange and inter-married with larger and lighter-skinned outsiders—even while, somewhat paradoxically, remaining physically distinct (Benjamin 2013; Lye 2013). In addition, there is now hardly any trace of a single negrito language or group of languages. Present-day negritos all speak languages related to those of their Austronesian-speaking or Austroasiatic-speaking neighbours—in the Philippines and the Malay Peninsula respectively.

According to a widely accepted view, therefore, Andaman and Southeast Asian negritos, and even negritos living in the Malay Peninsula and the Philippines, may never have comprised a genetic or historic unity (Benjamin 2013). But this question awaits full resolution, as does the related question of whether negritos, and especially those living in the Andaman Islands, represent the descendants of the earliest wave of modern humans to enter southern, eastern, and southeast Asia from Africa 70 to 90 kya. For one thing, some evidence points to a genetic affinity between Andamanese and Malaysian negritos, and, moreover, to connections between the latter and negritos in the Philippines (Chaubey and Endicott 2013; Aghakhanian et al. 2015). At the same time, genetics provides no support for the old theory, first formulated by Quatrefages (1887), that Andamanese and Southeast Asian negritos are related to the similarly small African pygmies, despite their cultural similarities (McAllister 2010).

Whatever the extent of their shared genetic ancestry, a remarkable historical and cultural connection between negritos in the Andamans and in different parts of Southeast Asia is suggested by certain identical religious or symbolic beliefs and practices. These include a series of taboos and rituals concerning tropical thunderstorms and human relations with animals. Although also present among some Austronesian speakers in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, as Blust (1981, 2013) has demonstrated, these ideas and practices must have been shared by negritos in the Malay Peninsula and the Philippines before the movement of Austronesians out of Taiwan (where the beliefs and practices are absent) and their arrival in the Philippines, where Austronesians adopted them from previously established negrito populations. What is more, Blust has identified cognate names for a thunder god (or a 'high god' closely associated with thunderstorms) found in negrito languages in both the Philippines and the Malay Peninsula, but nowhere else in the region.

Yet regardless of the importance of this evidence for understanding Southeast Asian prehistory, such cultural continuity barely concerns Verhoeven's use and understanding of 'negrito'. Not only was he probably unaware of beliefs about thunderstorms and thunder taboos on Flores (Forth 1989), but he employed 'negrito' solely in reference to a distinct physical type or 'race'. Verhoeven's familiarity with the category 'negrito' evidently had two main sources. One was the research on pygmoid peoples in Africa and Southeast Asia conducted by Verhoeven's predecessors in the SVD. Noteworthy among these was Paul Schebesta (see, for example, Schebesta 1952), who wrote on both African pygmies and Malaysian negritos and whom Verhoeven (1958a) cites in his main article on Toge Cave. Another was Martin Gusinde, who worked mainly in Africa but who visited Verhoeven on Flores in the 1960s. Equally important, though, was the earlier SVD priest and anthropologist Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954).

The founder of the Anthropos Institute and the journal *Anthropos* (Zimon 1986:241), Schmidt is best known for 'primitive monotheism', his theory that a belief in a single, all-powerful god was the original religious idea. Based on the early cultural evolutionary notion that modern, small-scale societies of hunter-gatherers were the most representative of ancient peoples, Schmidt sought support for this thesis among populations of pygmies and negritos (Zimon 1986:253; McAllister 2010:123–4), and it was with this aim that he sent his students, most famously Schebesta, to conduct anthropological research in both Africa and Southeast Asia.

More relevant to Verhoeven's palaeoanthropological investigations, however, was that Schmidt was the inventor of 'Schmidt's bar' (McAllister 2010:57), the standard that defines pygmies (including negritos) as populations whose male members do not attain an average adult height of above 1.5 metres. Therefore, by estimating the stature of the skeleton he excavated at Toge Cave as 146 centimetres, and furthermore as belonging to a male, Verhoeven's interpretation of the individual as a 'negrito' was perfectly reasonable. From animal and plant remains discovered in Toge Cave (including the bones of the Sulawesi warty pig, several species of large rats, a porcupine, a large bat, and a Long-tailed macaque), Verhoeven (1958b) implicitly regarded this negrito as a hunter-gatherer. And as more recent analysis of the wear on the individual's teeth has shown (Van der Plas 2007), in this too, Verhoeven was apparently correct.

The second source of Verhoeven's familiarity with 'negritos' was research conducted mainly by Dutch physical anthropologists during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. Working in what was then the Netherlands East Indies, anthropologists at this time, employing an older descriptive and typological approach, saw current phenotypical variation within and between Indonesian populations as reflecting a history of regional migration. While proponents mostly spoke of 'negrito' elements or 'types' discernible within the larger populations that further incorporated elements labelled 'Mongoloid', 'Malay', 'Papuan', and 'Melanesian', some writers speculated that separate negrito populations might still be encountered in remote mountainous parts of some islands, including Flores. In any case, the more general anthropological view proposed 'negritos' as the earliest human inhabitants of the Indonesian region, who were eventually replaced or absorbed by later, larger-bodied and lighter-skinned populations (see Sysling 2016 for a comprehensive review of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature illustrating this view).

Among these early anthropologists, the most important for Verhoeven was apparently Wilhelmina Keers, whose 1948 monograph Verhoeven (1958a) cites in his main article on Toge Cave. Using hair texture, chin form, and forehead

shape as her primary criteria, Keers identified 'negritos' as a component of populations residing in several parts of Flores. Keers departed from 'Schmidt's bar' by accepting individuals of greater stature as negritos, including some who were taller than the current male average for Flores as a whole (Van der Plas 2007:90), or just over 1.6 metres (Glinka n.d.). Apparently, so too did Verhoeven (1958a), as he describes a skeleton he found in another Flores cave (Liang Momer) as belonging to 'a negrito of larger stature'. In any case, insofar as Verhoeven accepted Keers's interpretations, he would have been justified in classifying as 'negrito' not just the Toge Cave skeleton but equally a Florenese Catholic priest, as I explain below.

3 Verhoeven's Views on Modern Negritos

Nowhere in his published or unpublished writings did Verhoeven disclose his belief that territorially discrete groups of negritos still lived on Flores.[3] Nevertheless, his view on this matter is clearly revealed in fieldnotes written by the late Clark Cunningham (1934–2020), a cultural anthropologist formerly at the University of Illinois. In addition, Cunningham's information is confirmed by my subsequent correspondence with Professor Jósef Glinka SVD (1932–2018), a missionary-anthropologist and Verhoeven's sometime colleague on Flores.

Early in 2011, I was visiting staff at the British Natural History Museum in London. There I was shown skeletal materials from Verhoeven's excavation at Toge Cave, recorded as having been delivered to the museum by Clark Cunningham in 1962. Curious to learn more, I wrote to Cunningham in March 2011, and in his reply he explained that in June of 1961, after completing doctoral research among the Atoni people of Indonesian Timor, he had visited Flores, where he met Verhoeven in the port town of Ende, a major centre of the Catholic Church on the island. Verhoeven had entrusted Cunningham to take the materials to the London museum for safekeeping and to solicit the views of the museum's anthropological staff. In his recent biography of Verhoeven, Knepper (2019:188) also mentions Cunningham's London visit, but he says nothing about what Verhoeven and the American anthropologist might have talked about during their 1961 meeting.

In fact, while in Ende, Cunningham interviewed Verhoeven about his palaeoanthropological work. Almost certainly referring to Toge Cave, Verhoeven told him how he had discovered a negrito skeleton just 1.3 metres tall.

3 Personal communication with G. Knepper, 18-9-2011; see also Knepper 2019.

As the figure given in his 1958 paper was 1.46 metres, it seems either Verhoeven misspoke or Cunningham misheard; in any case, nowhere in his published or unpublished work does Verhoeven refer to skeletons of such small stature.[4] But in the same conversation, Verhoeven also described negritos as still living on Flores, and Professor Cunningham kindly sent me a copy of his notes on this topic. The most relevant passage reads:

> [Father Verhoeven] says that there is a group of people in the remote mountains of Ngada, under the rajah [native administrator] in Bo'a Wae, who are almost certainly Negrito, clear in their features today. A visiting physical anthropologist was just there, he said, and verified it. (He had visited Negritos in Malaya and the Philippines.) These people speak the Ngada language, but differently. As yet, he said, there has not been any research among them. He fears that *kemajuan* ['economic and political development, progress', Indonesian] will absorb these groups before research can be done among them. There is a young priest from that group now in Ende.

Confirming the putative negrito group's occupation of territory within the region of Nage-Keo (at the time, the 'autonomous region' [*swapraja*] of Nage-keo, or simply Nage) is Verhoeven's description of the group as falling within the jurisdiction of the Nage raja, resident in the village of Bo'a Wae. 'Ngada' was the larger administrative region that, at the time, incorporated Nage-Keo.

Intrigued by Verhoeven's mention of this 'negrito' group, and especially his statement that a Florenese priest belonged to the group, I made further enquiries during a field-trip to Flores in July and August 2011. Describing the contents of Cunningham's notes to people in the Nage region I had known since 1984, several immediately responded that the Florenese priest could be none other than Father Zakharias Ze—in 2011 still a well-known figure throughout Nage-Keo and even further afield. They also put me in touch with surviving relatives of Father Zakharias, who informed me that he had been born in 1912 in the now abandoned village of Roro, and that he had died in 1995.

As Zakharias Ze was therefore just five years younger than Verhoeven, the fact that he had described Ze as a 'young' priest is curious, for in 1961 he would already have been 49 years old, thus not much younger than Verhoeven himself. The adjective may reflect Ze's recent ordination, in 1955. But one wonders whether it might also be traced to the native priest's small size. According to

4 Personal communication with G. Knepper, 31-3-2011.

several accounts, supported by the evidence of old photographs, Zakharias Ze stood about 1.5 metres tall (the maximum average male height, it will be recalled, of a 'pygmy'). And though it is not impossible to find other men of this height in Nage-Keo, it is definitely short by local standards. In addition, the evidence of both informants' statements and photographs revealed that Zakharias Ze was dark-complexioned and had tight curly hair.

Ze's birthplace of Roro was located specifically in the colonial district initially designated as 'Keo'—before its amalgamation with the Nage district. In fact, Father Zakharias was the first person from the combined Nage-Keo region to enter the Catholic priesthood. The priest's derivation from Keo is particularly significant because Keers had identified 'Kotta' (more accurately, Kota), the former colonial administrative centre of Keo, as one of four places in the combined eastern Indonesian islands of Flores, Sumba, and Timor that had 'the greatest number of negritos' (Keers 1948:148).

Whatever the initial source of Verhoeven's interpretation, Verhoeven's familiarity with Keers's work, and therefore her identification of Keo as one of just a few places where negritos were concentrated, would naturally have lent force to his identification of Father Zakharias, the dark-complexioned and small-statured Keo native, as a 'negrito'. Verhoeven himself, it should be noted, never conducted anthropometric investigations on Flores. Thus he would have been unable to systematically identify features of the Toge Cave 'negrito' with those of living individuals he incidentally encountered while conducting pastoral duties and whom he evidently identified intuitively as negritos on the basis of body size and features of skin and hair. (As noted, besides its small size, Verhoeven necessarily identified the Toge skeleton on the basis of cranial and post-cranial morphology.)

Also consistent with Verhoeven's identification of Zakharias Ze as a negrito is his description of the priest's group as living in 'remote mountains'. Ze's natal village of Roro is indeed located in one of the most mountainous parts of Nage-Keo, and especially in view of the poor condition of the roads that existed in 1961, it would not be inaccurate to describe the region as 'remote'. In addition, Verhoeven would certainly have known that the attested Southeast Asian negritos, in Malaysia and the Philippines, typically inhabit mountainous regions. In 1999, thus long before I heard about Verhoeven's views on Zakharias Ze, I was asking Father Herman Scholte, an elderly SVD priest stationed in the Nage region, about a local legend (of a sort to which I will return just below) concerning hairy hominoids that had once lived in a cave on the higher slopes of the Ebu Lobo volcano, which dominates the southern half of the Nage-Keo region. Scholte was not familiar with the legend. However, during the course of our conversation, he did mention 'pygmies' (*orang katai* in Indonesian) who lived

or had once lived in Lado Lima, the name of the *desa* (administrative unit) in which Father Zakharias's natal village of Roro was located. Clearly, then, Verhoeven's conviction that negritos still lived on Flores was still in circulation nearly four decades after Cunningham's interview, at least in Catholic church circles.

From various Keo and Nage people who remembered Zakharias Ze, I also learned that Father Zakharias was a bold and fearless person, famous for standing up to anyone who stood in the way of the work of the mission. Particularly well known is a story I recorded in several places concerning his clash with Muslim inhabitants of the Isle of Ende (Pulau Ende), sometime in the late 1950s or early 1960s. The island fell within the parish of Nangapanda, where Zakharias Ze was at the time parish priest. On one occasion, Father Zakharias travelled to Pulau Ende to attend to the few Catholics residing on this mainly Muslim island. But on reaching his destination, a throng of Muslims began verbally abusing him and tried to prevent his landing, and he was able to disembark only with the help of a certain *haji* (a Muslim who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca). According to the legend, after Father Zakharias completed his visit and returned to the mainland, he put a curse on the islanders. The fish in the waters around the island then mysteriously died and, except for the good *haji* and his family, anyone who ate the fish fell ill. After that, all the Muslims of Ende Island became afraid of Father Zakharias and treated him with respect.

As I learned in 2011 from Zakharias Ze's surviving relatives, the Catholic priest possessed other mystical powers. Whenever he visited highland regions in times of drought, rain would fall shortly afterwards. On another occasion, he caused a dwelling to shake, 'as if an earth tremor were occurring', simply by holding onto a house-post. But with regard to his physical appearance rather than his reputed supernatural abilities, the Pulau Ende story also includes another detail. On his arrival on the island, the Muslim islanders mocked Ze by calling him 'monkey-faced', a metaphor that focuses on the relative maxillary prognathism, thick brow ridges, and deep-set eyes that people throughout central Flores employ to refer to human faces judged unattractive (Forth 2016: 34). Not to excuse such an insult, it must be mentioned that various people I spoke to in 2011 and subsequently, described Zakharias Ze as 'ugly', and, indeed, as having a monkey-like face.

Not surprisingly, none of Ze's relatives or the other people I consulted in 2011 knew about Verhoeven's identification of Father Zakharias as a 'negrito' (a term with no precise translation either in Indonesian or the local language). However, after being shown photographs of the late priest, I realized I had myself briefly met the man, also in Ende, during my first trip to Flores in October 1983. At that time, other priests identified Ze as someone from Nage-Keo

and, as I confirmed from notes taken on the occasion, he was introduced as Father Zakharias. I also recall being impressed by his small size and dark complexion, as well as by what seemed a somewhat gruff manner. But the decisive evidence that Ze was the 'negrito' referred to during Cunningham's interview with Verhoeven came from Verhoeven's former colleague Jósef Glinka, in a letter dated 8 October 2011.

A professor of anthropology at Airlangga University in Surabaya, Professor Glinka's communication was in response to a letter of mine dated 12 September 2011. In the letter, I summarized Cunningham's notes and asked if he had any idea who might have been the 'young priest' and the 'visiting physical anthropologist' to whom Verhoeven had referred. (I did not, of course, mention the name Zakharias Ze.) In his response Glinka immediately identified the visiting anthropologist as Martin Gusinde, the aforementioned SVD priest who had studied pygmies in the Congo and who followed Quatrefages's (1887) now discredited view that pygmoid peoples everywhere, including Southeast Asian negritos, had a single origin in Africa. But more importantly, Glinka spontaneously mentioned Father Zakharias as someone Gusinde had met during his visit, and whose appearance convinced Gusinde that the Nage-Keo native was a negrito. Professor Glinka's statement is worth quoting in full:

> It would seem [Verhoeven's] conviction [about negritos on Flores] was strengthened by an article by Martin Gusinde, who during the 1960s visited Flores in order to find evidence for the presence on Flores of negritos like those found in the Philippines and Malaya. According to an eyewitness, Gusinde met Father Zakharias Ze SVD and was convinced that he was a negrito. Father Ze was of course quite short, with tight curly hair and a somewhat prognathous face. Gusinde heard that in the southern part of the Nage-Keo district, from where Father Ze derived, there were many people with the same features. As a result, Gusinde spread the fairy tale [*dongeng* in Indonesian] at a certain international conference that Flores was still inhabited by negritos.[5]

Though imprecise, the 'southern part of the Nage-Keo district' correctly describes the location of Zakharias Ze's natal village of Roro. Which 'article' by Gusinde Professor Glinka alluded to is unclear, but Gusinde's visit to Flores took place in the middle of 1960 (Knepper 2019:184), hence just a year before Cunningham's visit.

5 Personal communication, 8-10-2011; my translation from the original Indonesian.

Later in the same letter, Professor Glinka proposed that the ultimate source of Verhoeven's conviction that there were still negritos on Flores was his acceptance of local 'folk-tales'. Glinka thus remarked:

> In folk-tales it is often mentioned that Flores was formerly inhabited by short people, quite dark and covered in body hair, who lived in caves. Verhoeven was convinced by these stories. Thus he called the human skeleton he found in Manggarai [that is, Toge Cave] 'negrito', before the skeleton was studied by experts.

Actually, Glinka's claim is inexact. Verhoeven's interpretation of the Toge skeleton as a negrito must at least partly be attributed to older anthropological claims about negritos being the oldest segment of Flores's population. In addition, in the 1958 article in which Verhoeven identifies the Toge skeleton as negrito or proto-negrito, Verhoeven cites interpretations to the same effect, conveyed in letters from professional palaeoanthropologists G. von Koenigswald and J. Huizinga (presumably the experts Glinka mentions).

Glinka's statement also raises questions regarding the identity of the supposedly influential 'folk-tales'. A book published by Forth (2008) devotes two chapters to Florenese accounts of humans or hominoids of precisely the description given by Professor Glinka. However, rather than being former inhabitants of Flores, in some instances people claim the hairy cave-dwellers are still extant, and rarely are they described as curly or frizzy-haired, as is characteristic of negritos. At the time of writing (2011), Glinka was not familiar with my book. Even so, older Dutch literature discussed by Forth (2008:62–3) refers to traditions of former, hairy-bodied indigenous people, and some of these are described as having lived in caves.

Though I have never found conclusive evidence, it is possible that such local legends once circulated orally among Catholic priests. Still, whatever is made of Glinka's claim, it would not have been unreasonable for Verhoeven to infer some connection between the remains of short-bodied humans he excavated in Toge Cave and local stories of cave-dwellers. What is more, it may be relevant that African pygmies have been described as possessing hairy bodies (Schweinfurth 1873; McAllister 2010). Indeed, one of the three 'morphotypes' Glinka himself (Glinka, Artaria, and Koesbardiat 2010) identified for Indonesia, and within which he would certainly have placed Verhoeven's 'negritos', is characterized as being more hairy-bodied, as well as darker-skinned and less straight-haired, than the other two types.

There is also a personal context for Glinka's patently critical statement concerning Verhoeven's credulity of Florenese folk-tales. As Knepper (2019)

recounts in his biography, Glinka was an antagonist of his fellow priest. Most notably, in 1971 he accused Verhoeven of 'smuggling' the Toge Cave skeleton out of Indonesia and sending it illegally to the Netherlands along with other items he had supposedly stolen from the small museum at the Catholic Seminary in Ledalero, near the island's port town of Maumere. Verhoeven denied the accusations and was later exonerated. Nevertheless, Glinka, who at the time was teaching at Ledalero, remained convinced of Verhoeven's misdeeds until his (Glinka's) death in 2018 (Knepper 2019:224–5, 229).

4 Flores Negritos, Ancient and Modern

But what basis is there for Verhoeven's claim that groups of 'negritos' survive as a distinct component of the Flores population?

A myth told by the people of Tana Wolo, another mountainous region to the north-west of Nage-Keo, concerns a woman who lived long ago named Ine Mite (roughly 'mother black' or 'black woman'). Ine Mite had several brothers, one of whom left Tana Wolo in search of fire, because at this time she and her siblings were obliged to eat their food raw. According to one version of the story, Ine Mite was very dark-skinned, short (with his hand the narrator indicated a height of about 1.3 or 1.4 metres) and 'had an ugly face like a monkey's'. According to a more detailed version, both this woman and her several brothers were not only dark-skinned but had frizzy head hair, hairy bodies, and 'large, well-formed noses'. But whereas at least some of the brothers were short-statured, a trait reputedly retained by some of their (unidentified) present-day descendants, according to the narrator of this version Ine Mite was 'tall'—which of course would rule her out as a negrito. (She was also described as very strong.) At present, descendants of Ine Mite's brothers—the woman herself never married or bore children—can still be found scattered among other, lighter-skinned and generally taller populations, some of which fall within the boundaries of Nage-Keo.

As suggestive as this story may be, I have never encountered similar myths in Keo or Nage, nor any reports of distinct groups of short, dark-skinned people residing in either region. To maintain a distinct identity, such people would of course have to keep territorially separate from other people and practise at least a flexible endogamy, marrying largely within the group. The information I collected in 2011 from surviving relatives of Father Zakharias provided little support for the recent existence of a separate negrito population in the vicinity of his natal village of Roro. My main informants included a son and a daughter of two of his brothers. According to Ze's nephew, R. Tamo, Roro was founded

generations ago by people who had moved from a mountain-top village named Beo. Early in the twentieth century Roro was, in turn, abandoned, with people founding new settlements nearby, which are still inhabited today. When Roro was still occupied, the residents, according to Tamo, married mostly within the village or the inhabitants of another village that derived from Beo. However, later on, the residents of both settlements more often began to take spouses from other, more distant villages.

Ze's paternal grandfather's marriage was thus endogamous, whereas the genealogy of Ze's mother, somewhat curiously, was unknown. On the other hand, the wives of two of Ze's brothers—and the mothers of his nephew (R. Tamo) and his niece, named M. Wula—were both from Munde Mi, a village to the south. The niece described the Munde Mi people, spontaneously, as 'light-skinned', while her father, she said, was 'darker complexioned even than Ze'; a photograph she showed me also revealed that her father had frizzy hair. All the same, Wula further stated that not all the people from Roro were short and dark. Similarly, Tamo described his father, Ze's elder brother, as having been 'tall'.

Clearly, there is not enough here to indicate that the Roro (or Beo) people ever displayed anything like a single, distinctive physical type. Even if they did so formerly, it is unlikely this would still be apparent in the 1960s, when Cunningham interviewed Verhoeven and when Gusinde visited Flores. It also remains uncertain whether either Gusinde or Verhoeven ever visited Zakharias Ze's home region, so Gusinde's confirmation of Verhoeven's views about a negrito presence on Flores may well have been based solely on Ze's physical appearance. In any case, any former endogamy would be unlikely to distinguish the Roro (or Beo) people from other groups, as until recently, people had tended to marry members of the same village in other parts of Keo and Nage as well, without this resulting in the villagers becoming physically distinct from neighbouring groups (Forth 2001:275–6). Finally, I should emphasize that individuals corresponding to the 'negrito' phenotype, in regard to shorter than average stature, complexion, hair texture, or some combination of these features, can be found all over Flores, living among people displaying a different physical appearance.

A basis for Verhoeven's claim that Zakharias Ze's group was linguistically distinctive is equally lacking. As I discovered in 2011, the Roro dialect displays several special features in regard to phonology. But the Keo and Nage regions (and the larger 'Ngada' region by which they were formerly subsumed) include speakers of several different languages and numerous dialects. Not only that, but it is common for pronunciation and lexicon to vary between settlements located just a few kilometres apart. So if Verhoeven's statement is taken to sug-

gest that the Roro people spoke differently from all other inhabitants of this part of Flores, conceived as a linguistic unity, it is quite misleading.

Just as importantly, there is no evidence that the 'negritos' of Keo ever differed from surrounding groups with regard to economy, culture, or social organization. As noted, in recent times negritos elsewhere in Southeast Asia have been primarily hunter-gatherers. Given the Late Holocene date for the Toge skeleton, it is quite possible that the Toge Cave people were food collectors who shared Flores Island with culturally (and possibly physically) distinct agriculturalists. Yet ethnographic evidence indicates that the Keo and Nage people, although still engaged in hunting, have been cultivators, raisers of livestock, and users of metal tools for as long as anyone can remember.

5 Negritos, Prehistoric Humans, and other Hominins

The story of Zakharias Ze adds significantly to our understanding of what Verhoeven understood by 'negrito'. In Cunningham's interview, Verhoeven spoke in the plural of 'groups' of negritos surviving on Flores, so he evidently thought there were other (possibly undiscovered) negrito populations on the island besides Father Zakharias's 'group'. And though he never said so in print, the fact that Verhoeven mentioned these contemporary negritos in the context of discussing his palaeoanthropological work suggests that he regarded them as descendants of the 'proto-negrito' people who had occupied Toge Cave.

In addition, other evidence indicates that Verhoeven regarded the Toge people as descended from a long lineage of Flores humans, including the hypothetical hominins that were contemporaries of the Middle Pleistocene stegodons whose fossils Verhoeven came across in 1957. There is nothing to suggest that Verhoeven did not consider either modern Flores 'negritos' (like Zakharias Ze) or the Toge skeleton to be *Homo sapiens*. But this requires qualification.

Citing the views of Huizinga and Von Koenigswald, Verhoeven (1958a) in his first article on the Toge skeleton described the skull as 'strongly dolichocephalic' and 'very prognathous' (hyperprognatic tending towards ultraprognatic, according to Jacob's 1967 analysis), with a wide, thick lower jaw, 'only slightly rounded zygomatic arches', and extraordinarily large molars. In addition, the skull was associated with a pelvis that revealed 'an archaic structure'. Further describing the cranium, Verhoeven (1958a:231) remarks:

> [...] the greatest skull width is at the back of the head, as is always the case with the old primates (*Pithecanthropus*, *Homo soloensis*, and others), in contrast to recent dolichocephalics, where the greatest skull width

> lies further forward. Professor Huizinga suggests that it is from the proto-negrito type that the present day brachycephalic negritos would have developed [...].

Pithecanthropus is of course the old name for Javanese *Homo erectus*, while *Homo soloensis*—also known as the Ngandong hominins—are now interpreted as the last of the erectines, dating from 117 kya to 108 kya (Rizal et al. 2019). So Verhoeven characterized the 'proto-negrito' skeleton as possessing a number of erectine features typical of species much older than *Homo sapiens*. Before radiocarbon dates were obtained in 1964 (and probably afterwards as well), Verhoeven, we should recall, apparently believed the Toge skeleton to be 30 or 40 thousand year old. Along these lines, it should be noted that the crania of the relatively recent Ngandong (Solo) hominins, at one time estimated to date to between 27 and 53.3 kya (Swisher et al. 1996), appear relatively modern, so that some palaeoanthropologists have interpreted these as an early form of *sapiens* rather than late-surviving *erectus*. This is not to suggest a definite influence on Verhoeven's view of the age of the Toge skeleton. Still, it is interesting that Verhoeven should link a human showing reputedly archaic features with the morphologically most *sapiens* of the erectines.

In 1957, thus just a year before publishing his papers on Toge Cave, Verhoeven, working in cooperation with professional palaeontologists, began investigating the numerous stegodon fossils found in the So'a Basin. In March of that year, he came across stone artefacts (blades and flakes) in proximity to the stegodon sites, although only as surface finds (Maringer and Verhoeven 1970:299). Verhoeven's note (1958c) on his discovery of stegodon fossils appears in the same issue of *Anthropos* as his paper on the Toge skeleton. And citing an apparently unpublished opinion by the French palaeoanthropologist Abbé Breuil, in the second piece Verhoeven suggests that the 'Lower Palaeolithic' artefacts he found indicated the presence of 'ancient human races' on Flores that were contemporary with the stegodons.

In excavations conducted between 1963 and 1968 at the So'a Basin sites named Boaleza (correctly Bo'a Leza) and Matamenge (Mata Menge), Verhoeven found further stone artefacts—this time in layers associated with stegodons (initially identified as *Stegodon trigonocephalus*). Comprising pebble-tools, flake-tools, and blade-tools, together with cores and debitage, Verhoeven and his co-author interpreted these artefacts as 'proof of the presence of Pleistocene humans on Flores'. At the same time, they acknowledged that skeletal remains of 'Pleistocene or Palaeolithic Flores humans' that were contemporary with the stegodon remains had yet to be discovered (Maringer and Verhoeven 1970:246). Still, from comparison with fauna and similar stone industries found

on Java, Verhoeven and Maringer interpreted the artefacts' age as 'Middle or Upper Palaeolithic' and their producers as 'early Upper Pleistocene' hominins, and more likely the Solo hominins (*Homo soloensis*) than *Pithecanthropus*. As his biographer points out, after finding the So'a Basin stone tools, Verhoeven's 'scientific ambition' then became 'to find Pithecanthropus fossils on Flores'[6]—an ambition he never realized.

It was of course morphological features reminiscent of *Homo soloensis* and Pithecanthropus (now both *Homo erectus*) that Verhoeven ascribed to the skeleton he found at Toge Cave. Indonesian lithics show considerable continuity throughout the Pleistocene and into the Holocene, meaning that types of stone tools cannot definitely be associated with different hominin species (Bellwood 2017:65–7). Thus it is reasonable to infer that Verhoeven saw the Toge Cave 'negrito' as being culturally continuous with Middle or Upper Pleistocene stegodon 'hunters'—and in view of the supposedly erectine features of the Toge skeleton, morphologically and genealogically continuous as well.

Verhoeven assumed the Pleistocene tool-makers were hunters or consumers of the stegodons—as have later palaeoanthropologists. So far no direct evidence has been found for either practice, for example in terms of anthropogenic cut marks on fossilized bone (Meijer et al. 2019). Yet to a remarkable degree more recent investigations have confirmed Verhoeven's bold conclusions about the So'a Basin lithics and their hominin makers. Excavations begun in the 1990s and continuing into the 2010s, conducted mostly at the same sites investigated by Verhoeven in the 1960s, have uncovered stone artefacts dating from 880 kya and associated with the large stegodon *Stegodon florensis florensis* (Morwood et al. 1998). Further artefacts have been found dating from 1.02 mya, a time that predates the disappearance of the pygmy stegodon *Stegodon sondaari* from the So'a Basin (Brumm et al. 2010). But even more remarkably, modern palaeoanthropologists (Van den Bergh et. al. 2016) have discovered Middle Pleistocene hominin fossils at the same sites, dating to around 700 kya, and have provisionally identified these as ancestors of *Homo floresiensis*. Verhoeven, of course, thought that the contemporaries of the stegodon would be *Homo erectus*; since one theory of *floresiensis*'s origin has the tiny hominins descending from a form of *erectus*, he was not far wrong.

6 Personal communication with G. Knepper, 22-3-2021.

6 The Discovery of Homo Floresiensis and Verhoeven's Legacy

Verhoeven himself never found hominin fossils dating to earlier than 5 kya (Van der Plas 2007), yet his contribution to the discovery of *floresiensis*, 13 years after his death, is beyond question. As Mike Morwood, the Australian leader of the discovery team, has noted, a major aim of the research that resulted in *floresiensis*'s discovery was to find evidence for 'what had happened to the descendants of the people who made stone tools at Mata Menge [first discovered by Verhoeven] so long before [modern humans arrived on Flores]' (Morwood and Van Oosterzee 2007, 27). There are of course important differences between *floresiensis* and the hominin remains found by Verhoeven. For a start, if the Toge skeleton displayed archaic features, the diminutive *floresiensis*, dating to 50 or 60 kya according to the present estimate (Sutikna et al. 2016), showed many more. Some skeletal features of *floresiensis*, as well as the hominin's tiny brain, are described as more comparable to Australopithecines and even chimpanzees and other modern apes than to other members of the genus *Homo* (Brown et al. 2004; Argue 2017:61). Indeed, for this reason, Peter Brown, a member of the discovery teams, initially insisted that the little hominin be assigned to a new genus to be called *Sundanthropus* (Morwood and Van Oosterzee 2007:100–1, 115–6, 144–6, 150–1); and its assignment to *Homo* remains controversial. Finally, while the shortest of Verhoeven's finds, the Liang Toge skeleton, stood at around 1.5 metres, *floresiensis* grew to little more than a metre.

Accordingly, *floresiensis* has been identified as a new hominin species, while all the fossilized remains discovered by Verhoeven were unquestionably from modern humans (*Homo sapiens*). Still, there are connections of sorts. For one thing, Verhoeven implicitly understood the Toge 'negrito' to be a somewhat erectine descendant of Pleistocene stegodon hunters. For another, *floresiensis*—which Verhoeven of course never knew about—has been interpreted as evolving not just from the makers of the Middle Pleistocene stone tools, but, according to one view, ultimately from an erectine present on Flores over one million years ago (Van den Bergh al. 2016).

That being said, according to another interpretation, *floresiensis* derives from a smaller hominin comparable to the Australopithecine-sized *Homo habilis* (Argue et al. 2009). However, the matter seems far from being settled, and those who favour an erectine ancestor appear to be holding their ground. Where the majority of palaeoanthropologists do agree is on accepting *floresiensis* as a new species. A minority do not. Most notably, Teuku Jacob (1929–2007), once Indonesia's leading palaeoanthropologist, argued that the holotype (LB1) was just 7,000 years old and reflected a modern human (*Homo sapiens*) who suffered from microcephaly (Jacob et al. 2006). Accounting in part for

the hominin's small size, Jacob further maintained that what others had interpreted as *floresiensis* was in fact the ancestor of 'pygmies' still residing near the discovery site (Liang Bua) in the western Florenese village of Rampasasa, whose average adult height (from a sample of 76 individuals) was just 1.46 metres. (Jacob evidently chose 'pygmy' rather than 'negrito' because the Rampasasa people resemble negritos elsewhere only in regard to stature.)

Professor Glinka favoured a similar interpretation. In his letter of 8 October 2011, Glinka described Verhoeven's view that negritos still lived on Flores as a 'myth' that had 'resurfaced' with the discovery of *floresiensis*. He went on to describe this species as actually *Homo sapiens* and criticized the dates proposed by the discovery team as another 'fairy tale'. Citing a questionable claim by Henneberg (2011 [2008]) that has since been refuted (Brown 2008), he further added, 'as it happens one of the teeth [of the holotype, LB1] had been drilled and filled'—that is, afforded modern dental treatment. But more significantly for our purposes, by describing *floresiensis* and Verhoeven's 'negritos', which would include the Toge Cave people, as two instances of the same 'myth', Glinka in effect identifies them, if not completely, as two sorts of hominins that Verhoeven and the discovery team, respectively, had mistakenly distinguished from present-day humans.

Inasmuch as Verhoeven associated Flores's 'negritos' with pre-*sapiens* hominins, I have to agree with Glinka. But as for arguments by Jacob, Glinka, and others that *floresiensis* is no more than a variety of *sapiens*, these have all been effectively countered by numerous palaeoanthropologists on a variety of grounds (Morwood and Van Oosterzee 2007). In addition, a more recent analysis of DNA obtained from 32 of Jacob's Rampasasa 'pygmies', including whole-genome sequencing of 10 individuals (Tucci et al. 2018), shows that these people, while possessing Neanderthal, Denisovan, and modern human genes, reveal no genetic connection with more 'deeply divergent hominin groups' and therefore no link to *Homo floresiensis*. (Equally importantly, the authors further show how the small size of both the Rampasasa people and *floresiensis* likely reflects parallel instances of dwarfing, involving genes that selected for small stature in environments with limited food resources.)

As Verhoeven died over a decade before the discovery of *Homo floresiensis*, obviously we cannot know what he would have thought of this strange, morphologically archaic, and extremely small hominin. In the light of his other views on Flores palaeoanthropology, he would likely have sided with Teuku Jacob and Jósef Glinka, and rejected the interpretation of *floresiensis* as a new species. Either way, it is interesting how Verhoeven's conviction that there were negritos on Flores in the second half of the twentieth century finds an echo in Jacob's identification of the Rampasasa people as 'pygmies' (Jacob et al. 2006).

And on a less positive note, just as Verhoeven mistakenly supposed that contemporary negritos comprised distinct populations, so Jacob was incorrect in portraying Rampasasa pygmies as anything other than small-statured individuals or families sharing their village with taller, non-pygmoid neighbours (Forth 2008).

With regard to the Toge Cave skeleton, though, it is virtually certain that Verhoeven would have disagreed with Glinka and Jacob, both of whom viewed the occupants of Liang Bua as dating to a time far more recent than the dates proposed by the *floresiensis* discovery team—initially 12 kya, later revised to 50 to 60 kya. Again, we might recall Verhoeven's view that the Toge 'negrito' lived 30 (or 40) kya. Interestingly enough, these dates are somewhat more in accord with *floresiensis*'s archaic morphology and small size than the dates proposed by Glinka and Jacob, even though the Toge skeleton was of course much larger and far less archaic.

We should also recall that, in the 1950s and 1960s, when Verhoeven was conducting palaeoanthropological fieldwork, a major view of human evolution had different archaic hominins giving rise to *Homo sapiens* at different times and in different parts of the globe—thereby accounting for the several major 'races' then identified by physical anthropologists. According to this theory, most closely associated with Carleton Coon (1962) and now known as the multiregional model, Asian peoples, for example, were descendants of 'Peking man', a subspecies of *Homo erectus* discovered in north-eastern China. As an amateur, it is unclear how far Verhoeven would have been concerned with accommodating the Toge skeleton or his other Flores finds within any broader palaeoanthropological theory. Certainly, his publications provide evidence of no such concern. But if he were, he would have had no trouble identifying *Homo erectus* (*Pithecantropus* or *Homo soloensis*), whom he saw as the stegodon hunters of central Flores's So'a Basin and whose features he saw echoed in the Toge skeleton, as the ancestors of the Toge Cave people and furthermore, of the groups of negritos he conceived as surviving on Flores in his own time.

In this framework, it is difficult to imagine Verhoeven interpreting *floresiensis* as anything other than another member of this line, falling somewhere between stegodon-hunting erectines and his 'proto-negritos'. As for non-negritos—taller, lighter-skinned people inhabiting Flores and other eastern Indonesian islands together with supposedly 'negrito' populations—there is no reason to believe Verhoeven would not have shared the view of physical anthropologists of his day. That is, he would have regarded these people as descendants of more recent migrants from more northern and western parts of Indonesia and ultimately mainland Southeast Asia, people who, in an earlier

typology, were labelled Proto-Malays, Deutero-Malays, and so on (Sysling 2016). Of course, modern palaeoanthropologists interpreting *Homo floresiensis* as a new, non-*sapiens* species, similarly understand modern Florenese humans to be descendants of immigrants—but with a big difference. In their interpretation, and with *floresiensis* being presumed extinct, all humans now present on Flores are descended from populations of *Homo sapiens* who came to the island, ultimately from Africa, hundreds of thousands of years after the appearance of the possibly erectine ancestors of *floresiensis*.

Were it not for Verhoeven's palaeontological and archaeological work, there can be no doubt that *Homo floresiensis* either would not have been discovered or the species' discovery would have been indefinitely postponed. As Morwood and Van Oosterzee (2007) describe in detail, the diminutive hominin's size, morphology, and dates came as a total surprise. In fact, the species remains enigmatic nearly twenty years after its discovery. The discovery team expected to find nothing like it, and the occurrence of such a hominin in geologically recent times and contemporary with *Homo sapiens* is as revolutionary as Verhoeven's discovery of stegodons east of Wallace's Line.

It is therefore ironic that the character and current interpretation of *floresiensis* have laid to rest any suggestion that modern humans—be they the Toge Cave skeleton, Verhoeven's living 'negritos', or the 'pygmies' of Rampasasa—are descended from any kind of non-*sapiens* present on Flores before the arrival of the immigrant *Homo sapiens*. Still, it is fair to say that all we have learned from the mass of palaeoanthropological research surrounding the discovery of *floresiensis* is ultimately traceable to Verhoeven's pioneering work—not just on Flores's stegodons and conterminous human artefacts, but also on Flores's prehistoric humans. To give Verhoeven his further due, his questionable interpretation of the Toge woman as a 'negrito' was supported by professional palaeoanthropologists of his day, and, more recently, Jacob (1967) and Van der Plas (2007) have also interpreted certain features of the skeleton as resembling those of negritos elsewhere. The Toge skeleton was by far the shortest of the prehistoric individuals found by Verhoeven. Jacob (1967), who described the individual as pygmoid, further characterized the Toge skull as 'especially strange', an assessment that finds support in Van der Plas's demonstration that the cranium and other morphological features differ from those of all other Flores hominins dating from the same period (3,000 to 5,000 years ago).

7 Concluding Remarks

Palaeoanthropologists concerned with *Homo floresiensis* continue to cite Verhoeven's publications. For example, Tucci et al. (2018:511, n. 11), arguing how both *floresiensis* and the Rampasasa pygmies reveal separate instances of genetically selected hominin size reduction, refer to the Toge skeleton (Verhoeven 1958a) as another instance of 'more recent remains [than *floresiensis*] of short-statured humans' discovered on Flores. Interestingly, working solely with skeletal materials, Van der Plas (2007) reached much the same conclusion, suggesting with reference to larger and possibly older human remains from other sites on the island, that the Toge woman's small size could reflect dwarfism.

The continuity these citations reveal demonstrates once again the extent to which Verhoeven's researches laid the groundwork for later developments in Flores and Southeast Asian palaeoanthropology. But the last word belongs to the only living person we know who Verhoeven ever identified as a 'negrito': Father Zakharias Ze. The Keo priest has become something of a folk hero among Christian Florenese. Indirectly and inadvertently, he also made a mark on the anthropology of Flores—by way of Verhoeven's interpretation (disclosed by Clark Cunningham and Jósef Glinka) of his physical person as exemplifying a type Verhoeven identified with the Toge skeleton. Certainly, if Verhoeven's view of Father Zakharias had remained unknown, we would be far less able to appreciate the broader theoretical implications of the Dutch priest's palaeoanthropological studies, including his interpretation of lithic materials associated with Middle Pleistocene stegodons.

With good reason, Gert Knepper titles his biography of Father Verhoeven 'Flores man' (*Floresmens* in Dutch), or more exactly 'Flores human'. The expression of course refers to Verhoeven. Yet the title deliberately connects the missionary-palaeontologist with *Homo floresiensis*, a species also named 'Flores human'.[7] As Knepper adds, substituting for the *erectus* fossils he never found, *floresiensis* might be dubbed 'the posthumous Verhoevenian Pithecanthropus'. On the basis of its chimpanzee-sized brain and archaic morphology, several leading palaeoanthropologists have questioned the inclusion of *floresiensis* within the genus *Homo* (Morwood and Van Oosterzee 2007). But whether the species can properly be called 'human' is a different matter. Throughout his book on the discovery, Morwood quite deliberately called *floresiensis* 'human'.

7 Personal communication with G. Knepper, 22-3-2021.

Publishing mostly in German, Verhoeven similarly referred to all hominins he identified on the island, including those of the Middle Pleistocene age, as 'Flores humans' (Floresmenschen). But not least because Father Verhoeven, despite his long residence on Flores, remained Dutch, the title 'Flores human' applies unequivocally neither to the European priest nor to the non-*sapiens* hominin (initially interpreted as belonging not to Homo but to another genus, to be called *Sundanthropus*) but only to Zakharias Ze.

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